

The background of the entire image is a traditional marbled paper pattern. It features large, irregular, organic shapes in shades of brown and tan, some of which are filled with a fine, speckled green texture. These shapes are separated by thin, irregular veins of a bright red or orange color. The overall effect is a dense, intricate, and somewhat cellular pattern.

GRATTAN'S ADDRESS
TO HIS CONSTITUENTS

LONDON 1798

Bound by
ANTIQUARIAN
BOOKCRAFTS
Marley Craft Courtyard,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.

#391

IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

MR. GRATTAN's

A D D R E S S

TO

HIS CONSTITUENTS,

THE CITIZENS OF DUBLIN,

ON HIS

DETERMINATION TO RETIRE

FROM THE

PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. S. JORDAN, No. 166, Fleet-street;

And sold by all other Bookfellers.

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A D D R E S S,

Éc. Éc.

TO MY FELLOW CITIZENS OF DUBLIN.

I THANK you for past favours; I have found in you a kind and a gracious Master—you have found in me an unprofitable servant; under that impresson I beg to assure you, that so long as the present state of Representation in the Commons House continues, so long must I respectfully decline the honour of soliciting at your hands a seat in that Assembly.

On this principle it was I withdrew from Parliament, together with those with whom I act, and I now exercise my privilege, and discharge my duty in communicating with my Constituents, at the eve of a General Election, some say an immediate Dissolution, when I am to render back a trust, which, until Parliament shall be reformed, I do not aspire to re-assume. The account of the most material parts of my conduct, together with the reason of my resolution, will be the subject of this Letter.

When I speak of my conduct, I mean that adopted in common, and in concert with the other Gentlemen. We should have felt ourselves deficient in duty if we had not made one effort before the close of the Parliament, for the restoration of domestic peace, by the only means by which it seemed attainable, conciliation; and if we had not submitted our opinions, however fallible, and our anxieties, however significant, on a subject which in its

existence shook your state, and in its consequences must shake the empire. Our opinion was, that the origin of the evil, the source of the discontent, and the parent of the disturbance, was to be traced to an ill-star'd and destructive endeavour, on the part of the Minister of the Crown, to give to the Monarch a power which the Constitution never intended; to render the King in Parliament every thing, and the People nothing, and to work the People completely out of the House of Commons, and in their Place to seat and establish the Chief Magistrate absolute and irresistible; it appeared to us that a Minister guilty of such a crime, is as much a traitor to the Constitution as the People would be to the King, if they should advance in arms, and place the leader on the Throne, more guilty of treason and equity and justice; because in them it would only be rebellion against their creature, the King; but in the other it would be a rebellion against his creator, the People: it occurred to us, that in this country the offence would be still higher, because in this country, it would be the introduction not only of a despotic, but of a foreign yoke, and the revival of that great question which in 1782 agitated this country, and which, till your Parliament shall be reformed, must agitate this country for ever. We thought no Irishman—we were sure no honest Irishman would ever be in heart with Government, so long as the Parliament of this country shall be influenced by the Cabinet of England, and were convinced that the People would not be the more reconciled to a foreign yoke, because re-imposed by the help of their own countrymen, as long as they think it to be the case, we were convinced they will hate the Administration, and the Administration will hate them; on this principle we recollected the Parliament in this country pledged their lives and fortunes in 1782, though some seem to have thought better of it since, and are ready to pledge their lives and fortunes against this principle. We could not seriously believe, that the People of Ireland were ready to resist the legislative usurpation of the British Parliament, in whose station the greatness of the tyrant would have qualified the condition of the slave, and that the same people may prostrate themselves to the

legislative usurpation of another body—a British Cabinet. We recollected to have heard, that the friends of Ministry had lamented that England had not acceded to the American claim of exclusive legislature, and afterward attempted to re-establish British dominion, by influencing the American Assembly. We saw the Minister pursue that very plan toward Ireland which they regretted they had not resorted to in the case of America. We need not repeat the particulars, but we saw the result to be on the mind of the People a deep-rooted and established discontent and jealousy, and we conceived that whatever conspiracies existed in any extent or degree, proceeded from that original and parent conspiracy in the Minister to subvert the Parliamentary Constitution by the influence of the Crown. It appeared to us, that the discontent and disturbance so created, was greatly increased by another cause, the treatment of his Majesty's Catholic subjects.

It is the business of the Minister to observe the changes in the national spirit, as much as the changes of foreign combinations ;—it was the misfortune of our Ministry that they never attended to those changes; they did not perceive that the religious principle and temper, as well as the political, had undergone on the Continent, in America, and in Ireland, a fundamental alteration; that the example of America had had prodigious effect on Europe; the example and doctrine of Europe, had had no effect on America; they did not see that in consequence of that cause (there were other causes also) the Irish Catholic of 1792 did not bear the smallest resemblance to the Irish Catholic of 1692; that the influence of Pope, Priest, and Pretender were at an end.

Other dangers, and other influences might have arisen, new objects, and new passions; the mind of the People is never stationary, the mind of Courts is often stagnant, but those new dangers were to be provided against in a manner very different from the provisions made against the old.

Indeed, the continuation of the old system of safety approximated and secured the new danger; unfortunately our Ministers did not think so; they thought, they said, that

the Irish Catholic, notwithstanding the American Revolution, notwithstanding the French Revolution, religious as well as political, was still the bigot of the last century—that with respect to him the age had stood still---that he was not impressed with the new spirit of liberty, but still moped under the old spirit of bigotry, and ruminated on the triumph of the Cross, the power of Catholic Hierarchy, the riches of the Catholic Clergy, and the splendour of the Catholic Church.---You will find the speeches of the Catholic opponents, particularly the Ministerial declaimers, dream on in this manner, and you will find from the publications of those speeches, and of the Catholics, that the latter had laid aside their prejudices, but the Ministers had not: and one of the causes why, those Ministers, alleged, that the Catholic mind had not advanced was, that their own mind had stood still; the State was the bigot, and the People the philosopher.

The progress of the human mind in the course of the last 25 years has been prodigious in Ireland, I remember when there scarcely appeared a publication in a newspaper of any degree of merit which was not traced to some person of note, on the part of Government or the Opposition; but now a multitude of very powerful publications appear from authors entirely unknown, of profound and spirited investigation.---There was a time when all learning in Europe was confined to the Clergy---it then advanced among the higher orders of the Laity, and now it has gone among the People; and when once the powers of intellect are possessed by the great body of the nation, 'tis madness to hope to impose on that nation civil or religious oppression, particularly in those whose understandings have been stationary, though their power and riches have been progressive. The politics of the Castle, with the religious feuds of Ireland, had occupied and engrossed their mind---The eye of that mind, or intellectual vision, had become of course subtle indeed, but extremely little; on the other hand, the politics of Europe and America had occupied the mind of the People; and therefore the mind of the People had become comprehensive---And when the former complained of the press, they complained of the

superiority of the popular understanding. It appeared to us that the best remedy was to raise the understanding of the great by enlarging the sphere of its actions, viz. Reforming the Parliament.---But to return.

The Ministry, however, thought proper to persist in hostility to the Catholic body on a false supposition of its bigotry; the consequence of such an attempt was, that the great body of the Catholics, I mean that part the most popular and energetic, disappointed, suspected, reviled and wearied, united with that great body of the reformers, and formed a Catholic, Presbyterian, and Protestant league, for the freedom of the religion, and the free and full representation of the People. Out of this league a new political religion arose, superceding in political matter all influence of priest and parson, and burying for ever theological discord in the love of civil and political liberty. This is at present in all political matters the Irish Religion.

What is the Irish Religion? Unanimity against Despotism---Viewing the state of the country in this light, it appeared to us that the unconstitutional influence of the Crown, and the prescription of the Catholics, were the fundamental causes of our discontent and jealousy: with those there existed other discontents distinct from these causes, without these causes insignificant, but with these causes creating great agitation and disturbance. Two remedies occurred---coercion and conciliation: we opposed the former, and we proposed the latter.

I will trouble you with our reasons: we considered the system of coercion would in the first instance destroy the liberty of the People, and in the second instance, would subvert the authority and powers of Government. Here I beg to recur to what I have just observed on the necessity for those who administer to a country to advert to the changes that take place in the temper and understanding of the People. Unfortunately the Ministry provided, for the purpose of making the People quiet and contented, a system of laws and proclamations, which had they been quiet before would have rendered them distracted. I need not repeat them---we all know them---we had the barren office of giving a fruitless opposition---we saw a spirit of

reform had gone forth---it had conquered in America---it had conquered in France; both here and in England it existed, and was chiefly nourished and propagated by the abuses of our Government. It appeared to us that the best way of starving that spirit was to remove its food; far otherwise the proposers of the plan of coercion; they thought it better to feed that spirit and to cherish the abuses and encrease them; they hoped to fortify their Constitution against an epidemic distemper, by preserving uncured the old gouts and rheumatisms, and a host of other disorders. The power of limited monarchy was not to be preserved by constitutional power, which is its natural ally; but by despotic power, which is its natural death and dissolution. Instead of correcting the abuses of the State, they invented laws which were themselves an abuse, and proclamations which were an abuse also; and which greatly, though silently, propagated the new principle. There are two ways by which a new principle spreads; one is by arms, and by martyrdom the other. The Mahomedan religion was propagated by arms; it pleased Providence that the Christian religion should have been propagated by the latter. See whether the unfortunate choice of our Ministers has not given to the new principle the benefit of both: they have fled before it abroad, and they have trampled on it at home, and given it the double recommendation of conquest and martyrdom. This consideration was one of my objections to persist in the war with France, on account of Brabant, and it is one of my objections to persist in a war with the Irish on account of venal boroughs.

Had the Government, instead of aggravating, restrained abuses, they would have put the State at the head of a spirit of Reform, which they could no longer resist, and could only hope to moderate; it was to such a policy adopted by Queen Elizabeth that the Church of England owes principally what it retains of power and splendour preserved by the Government of the country who took the lead in the Reformation; but ours fell into a different project, they armed cap-a-pee against a spirit which they could not confine by arms abroad, nor by executions at home, and therefore instead of being at the head of po-

popular measures, they were at the tail of them in the Catholic question, in the place-bill, in the pension-bill, in every bill of a popular tendency; they resisted at first, they yielded at last, reluctantly and imperfectly, and then opposed, condemned and betrayed the principle of their own acquiescence; they agreed to a place-bill for instance, and then they multiplied places manifold. What is the bar-bill, or the bill that creates thirty new places for the Gentlemen of the Law? They agreed to the first Catholic bill, and then proscribed the person of the Catholics and oppose his freedom in corporations; they had before agreed to the establishment of the independency of the Irish Parliament, and then had created a multitude of officers to make that independency a name.

It is reported to have been said by some of the ministers of England, that his Majesty's reign has been to Ireland a course of concessions, and it was much a subject of wonder that the people of Ireland should persist in their dissatisfaction; the answers to those Ministers is obvious, the concessions were extorted from Ministers by the perseverance of Opposition, and they were rendered abortive by the treachery of Ministers. The recognition of our Parliamentary Rights has been rendered abortive by unexampled exertions of bribery and corruption; the freedom of our trade by debt and war, and the elective privileges of our Catholics by a course of personal persecution, and corporate influence, and on the whole the benefit of Constitutional laws, by the Administration of an unconstitutional Government. When the Ministers talk of their concessions to Ireland, do they know the concessions of Ireland to them? Do they know the debt of the war? Continue that rate of expence and the English wars of the next century will have the same effect as the English prohibition of the last; they will annihilate the trade of Ireland.

But to return to the Administration. They relapsed into their violence when they recovered from their fears, and their system has been therefore occasionally violent and weak, never strong and uniform. It is an observation of

Lord Bacon, that the fall of one of the Roman Emperors was due not to his tyranny nor his relaxation, but to both, and that the fluctuating system is ever fatal; it is an observation of the same, that the way to resist the progress of a new sect is to correct the abuses of the old ones. Unhappily our Ministers differed from Bacon; their system was faithful to no one principle either of violence or concession. We objected that it could not now resort to unqualified violence without incurring all the objections belonging to a policy of submission coupled with a policy of violence, and that it could not hope to obtain the advantages appertaining to either. In pursuit of such a system the Ministry seemed to us to have lost not only their discretion but their temper; they seemed vexed with themselves for being angry, they seemed to become in a passion with themselves because they had lost their temper with the people; in its struggle with popular rights, the State, like a furious wrestler, lost its breath as well as its dignity, as if an angry father should lose his temper with his child, in which case the old fool is the most incorrigible; in the mean time, the enemy seemed to understand our situation perfectly well, and relied on our expences for dissolving our credit, and our intemperance for dissolving our authority; and at the very time when we were precipitating on such measures at home we were receiving the most melancholy communications from abroad; we saw the Ministers retreating from the enemy with as rapid a step as he advanced upon the people, going back and back and back, while the Democratic principle in Europe was getting on and on, like a mist at the heels of the countryman, small at first and lowly, but soon ascending to the hills, and overcasting the hemisphere. Like the Government we wish to provide against the storm; like the Government we wish to disarm the people; as the best means of safety we wished to disarm the people, but it was by the only method by which a free people can be disarmed; we wished to disarm the people of their grievances, and then their other arms, their less dangerous arms, the bayonet, and even the pike, would be retained for no other use but the use of the Government. A naked man op-

pressed by the State is an armed post. A few decent Bishops sent to the Tower against law produced the Revolution. Mr. Hampden, and the four other innocent persons arraigned by Charles I. for High Treason, produced the the civil war; that grey-coated man, or that green-coated man sent on board a Tender, or detained in prison without a trial, he, too, will have his political consequence. Sensible acts of violence have an epidemic force; they operate by sympathy; they possess the air as it were by certain tender influences, and spread the kindred passion through the whole of the community. No wonder the difficulties have encreased on the Government! Sad experiment! to blood the magistracy with the poor man's liberty, and employ the rich like a pack of Government blood-hounds to hunt down the poor! Acts of violence, like these put an end to all law as well as liberty, or the affectation and appearance of either.

In the course of the session we asked to what end all this? and accompanied our question by stating the enfeebled resources of the country; we had mentioned at the beginning that the debt of the war had been about 5,000,000*l.* we were told it was an error; I wish it had been so---but, on examination, that sum appeared somewhat about the debt of the war. And it will appear, if the present Loans are filled, that the debt of the war will bear near 8,000,000*l.* We submitted the effects of the war on the resources of the country, and here again it was said we were in error; I wish we had been so; but at what interest does the State borrow money? an interest which between man and man would be usury, and nearly double the former rate. We mentioned the state of the revenue to have declined; again were we contradicted; but what is the fact? what business is now done on the quay? We did not wish to reveal the *arcana imperi*, we stated nothing more than appeared from the terms proposed in the Gazette, from the returns of your custom-house, and the printed resolutions touching the state of your manufactures; and we stated those public facts, not to damp the public confidence in the defence of the country, but to abate a little of that frantic confidence mani-

fested in a determination, at the hazard of her safety, to go on with a system of domestic coercion, till the Minister should conquer the people, and of foreign war till the same Minister should achieve another conquest at the risk of general ruin; till he should, sword in hand, recover Brabant; that Minister has found it a more profuse experiment to defend Cork than to take Flanders, as the Emperor has found it a safer experiment to abandon Flanders and Italy to save Vienna. We mentioned those our objections to such folly then, and I reap them now, not to damp your zeal against a foreign enemy, but to confine the zeal of Government to one enemy, and to deprecate a second enemy---our own people and a civil war added to a foreign one.---Such was the system of coercion. To oppose a remedy is easy; to propose one is difficult and anxious; it appeared to us that we should fail in duty and in candour, if when we resisted the project of Government, we did not submit a plan of our own, and the only plan that appeared to us to promise peace or prosperity was conciliation; we proposed, accordingly, the emancipation of the Catholics, and a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament. To the first it was objected, that such a a measure was irreconcilable with the safety of the King, or the connexion with England. To the first objection we answered, that the capacities of three-fourths of the people should not be made a personal compliment to his Majesty, and that the pretence for taking away those capacities should not be the religion of his Majesty's allies, of his present subjects of Canada, of his late subjects of Corsica, of a considerable part of his fleet, and a great part of his army, that the principles that placed his family on the Throne were those of Liberty, and that his Irish subjects, if not convicted of felony, were entitled to the benefit of those principles, and that the Catholics have in justice and reason at least as good a right to liberty as his Majesty has to the Crown. We observed that the only impediment to the Catholic claim, as the law now stands, was the oath requiring the abjuration of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of the real presence; that to make these points at such time as this, matter of alarm to the safe-

ty of the King was to give an air of ridicule to the calamities in which those, his Ministers, had involved him. That such opinions, abstracted from foreign politics, it was beyond the right or the power of the State to settle or punish; that Kings had no right to enter into the tabernacle of the human mind, and hang up there the images of their own orthodoxy; that the Catholics did not insist on his Majesty to be of their religion, that his Majesty had no right to exact that the Catholics should be of his; that we knew of no royal rule either for religion or mathematics; and indeed the distance between divine and human nature being infinite, the proportion in that reference between the King and the subjects is lost, and therefore in matters of religion they both are equally dark, and should be equally humble; and when Courts or Kings assume a dictation on that subject, they assume a familiarity with the Almighty, which is excess of blasphemy, as well as of blindness. Our contemplation, the most profound on Divine Nature, can only lead us to one great conclusion, our own immeasurable inanity, from hence we should learn that we can never serve God but in serving his creature, and to think we serve God by a profusion of prayer, when we degrade and proscribe his creature and our fellow-creature, was to suppose Heaven, like the Court of Princes, a region of flattery, and that man can there procure a holy connivance at his inhumanity the personal application of luxurious and complimentary devotion. Or if the argument were to descend from religious to moral study, surely, surely Ministers should have remembered that the Catholics had contributed greatly to the expences of war, and had bled profusely therein: that they themselves were much in debt to human nature, and should not lose that one opportunity of paying a very small part of it, merely by a restoration of loyal subjects to their own inheritance, their liberty. We suggested such a step as a measure of policy as well as justice, with a view to the strength of his Majesty, who was most improperly made a bar to such a concession. We suggested that his situation with regard to America, to Europe, to his allies and enemies, was critical, and that it was a mockery of that situation to suppose that the worship of

the Virgin Mary, of the doctrine of real presence, constituted any part of the royal difficulties; that there was no spectre to disturb the royal imagination but all existing substance—a gigantic form walked the earth at this moment, who smote Crowns with an hundred hands, and opened for the deduction of their subjects a hundred arms—Democracy; and we implored Ministers against such an enemy to ally and identify the King with all his people, without distinction of religion, and not to detach him from any part of them to make a miserable alliance with Priestcraft, which was a falling cause, and a superannuated folly.

With regard to the danger offered to the connexion with England from the emancipation of the Catholics, we observed that the argument was of a most dangerous and insulting nature, for it amounted to a declaration that the privileges of a vast portion of a nation should be sacrificed to another country; that it was not the old eternal question whether the privileges of one part of Ireland should be sacrificed to the ambition of the other, but whether a vast description of the people of Ireland should be sacrificed to England; we observed that in this part of the argument we need not recur to justice, we might rely on policy; and we asked, was it the policy of England for the Irish faith to make experiments on allegiance? We did not wish to exaggerate, but were justified in making this supposition:—Suppose Ireland the seat of Government, and that for the better securing the safety of the King, here resident, and for the connexion of Great Britain with Ireland, that the Irish should incapacitate all the Protestants of England? The same affection which England, on that supposition, would afford to the Irish, the same affection has she now a right to expect from Ireland. When England had conquered France, possessed America, guided the councils of Prussia, directed Holland, and intimidated Spain; when she was the great western oracle to which the nations of the earth repaired, from whence to draw eternal oracles of policy and freedom—when her root extended from Continent to Continent, and the dew of the two hemispheres watered her branches;

then, indeed we allowed with less danger, but never with justice, she might have made sacrifices of the claims of the Irish. I do not mean, we did not mean to press a sense of the change which has taken place in the power of England, further than to prevent further changes more mortifying and depressive, and to impress on Great Britain this important conviction, that as Ireland is necessary to her, so is complete and perfect liberty necessary to Ireland, and that both islands must be drawn much closer to a free Constitution, that they may be drawn closer to one another.

The 2d part of our plan of conciliation was the Reform of Parliament. The object of the plan was, to restore the House of Commons to the people. If the plan do not accomplish that, it is not the idea of the framers; but no plan could satisfy those persons who wished to retain the credit of Reformers and the influence of Boroughs---no plan could satisfy those who complained when any vestige of Borough influence was continued when the Parliament was not reformed, and when the vestiges were swept away, that the Constitution was demolished---no plan could satisfy those who desired that the Boroughs should be destroyed and preserved, and were willing to let the people sit in the House of Commons, provided Aristocracy sat in their lap. It is in favour of the plan submitted, that without any communication whatever with the other side of the water, it bears a strong and close resemblance to the plan proposed in the Parliament of Great Britain, and in that remembrance carries with it a presumption that it has a foundation in common sense and common interest; the objections to it founded on the presumed antiquity of the Borough system, hardly ventured to make their appearance; examination had shewn that the greater part of the Irish Boroughs were creations by the house of Stuart for the avowed purpose of modelling and subverting the Parliamentary Constitution of Ireland; that these were understated when called abuses in the Constitution; that they were gross and monstrous violations, recent and wicked innovations, and the fatal usurpations on the Constitution by Kings whose family lost the Throne for crimes less deadly to freedom, and who in their Star Chamber tyranny, in their High Com-

mission, in their Ship-money, or in their despenſing power, did not commit an act ſo diabolical in intention, ſo mortal in principle, or ſo radical ſubverſive of the fundamental rights of the realm, as the fabrication of the Court Parliament, and the excluſion of a Constitutional Commons, and which is a ſubverſion, not of the fundamental laws, but of the Constitutional Lawgiver; you baniſh that family for the other acts, and you retain that act by which they have baniſhed the Commons.

It was objected with more ſucceſs that the conſtitution of boroughs, however in theory defective, has worked well in the fact; but it appeared to us that this was an historic error---we ſtated in answer to that objection, that the birth of the borough inundation was the deſtruction of liberty and property, that James I. the King who made that inundation, by that means deſtroyed the titles of his Irish ſubjects to their lands, without the leaſt ceremony---the robbery of his liberty was immediately followed by the robbery of his property; for rely on it, the King who takes liberty will ſoon take away property, he will rob the ſubject of his liberty by influence, and then he may plunder him of his property by ſtatute. There were at that time, the hiſtorian adds, interior grievances; what were they? martial law and extortion by the ſoldiers, in levying the King's duties; a criminal juriſdiction exerciſed by the Caſtle chamber, and a judicial power of the Council. Theſe inferior and thoſe ſuperior grievances, amounted to no law at all. How could it happen, ſays the hiſtorian, that the King could do all this with ſo ſmall an army, ſeize the properties of the ſubjects, and transport the inhabitant. I will preſume to conjecture---The King had another inſtrument, more ſubtle and more pliable than the ſword, and againſt the liberty of the ſubject, more cold and deadly, a Court inſtrument, that murders freedom without the mark of blood, palls itſelf in the covering of the conſtitution, and in her own colours, and in her name, plants the dagger, a Borough Parliament. Under this borough ſyſtem, the reign of James was bad, but the next was worſe; the grievances which England complained of, under Charles the Firſt, were committed in

Ireland also. Those measures, I mean the new Councils---they had been aggravated here by an attempt to confiscate the province of Connaught: there is extant a correspondence on the subject of Ireland, between the King and his Deputy, Lord Stafford, of a most criminal and disgusting nature; his Majesty begins by professing his general horrors of the Constitution---he proceeds to acknowledge his particular injuries to the Irish; he owned that he had defrauded the Irish of their promised graces, and he expresses his fears that they have a right in justice to ask what it was his interest, as it appeared to be his determination, to refuse. His Deputy---What does he do? exceeds his royal master in his zeal against the pretensions of Ireland. A judicious Court sycophant will often flatter the Court of St. James's, by Irish sacrifice, whether it is the Constitution, or the fair name of the country. He, the Deputy, had, said the historian, two great objects---one was to fleece the people of Ireland, and the other was to cheat them---to get the money, and to elude the graces. He succeeded---why? because there was another, a third instrument, worse than himself---a borough Parliament---that borough Parliament met, it voted six subsidies, and redressed nothing; this is virtue and public in comparison to what it did utter---after committing these crimes for which the Deputy justly lost his head---after having seized part of the province of Connaught---after the inflicting martial law---monopolies---raising an army against law---and money to pay that army against law---after fining and confining against law---the borough Parliament vote that Deputy an extraordinary supply, and in the preamble of the act they pass on that Deputy and extraordinary panegyric, with such a thorough conviction of his iniquity and their own, that they after impeach that very Minister for those very acts, and record a protestation against the record of their panegyric, to give way to the meanness of another borough Parliament, who, on the return of his family, cancels the record of the protestation to restore the force of the panegyric---massacre---confusion---civil war---religious fury

followed and of course. Here you see hatched and matured the egg that produced the massacre, and that brood of mortal consequences.

The principles of right were rooted out of the land by Government, and they were amazed at anarchy---the barriers against inundation were removed by the Government, and they were astonished to be overwhelmed by a popular torrent---the principles of robbery were planted by the deputy, and the Government were surprised at the growth of popular pillage: had the country been left to a state of barbarous nature, she could not have been so shattered and convulsed as when thus reduced to a state of barbarous art, where the Government had vitiated that Parliamentary Constitution; it professed to introduce, and had introduced without professing it, influence not civilization, had set one order of the nation in feud against the other, had tainted the gentry with venality (there was bribery in those days as well as violence), and had given them idea of vice, but not days of refinement. I pass over a hundred and thirty years, a horrid vacuum in your history of Borough Parliaments, save only as it has been filled with four horrid images in the four-fold proscription of the religion, trade, of the Judicative and Legislative authority of the country, by the commercial restrictions of William, the penal laws of William and Anne, and the declaratory act of the 6th of George. And I come to the boundary of the gulph where the Constitution begins to stir and live in an octennial bill, accompanied, however, with, and corrected by, a court project of new Parliamentary influence and degradation. This project may be called a court plan for reforming borough Parliaments, but reforming them not on popular representation, but of a more complete and perfect exclusion and banishment of the Commons---the people had begun to form their certain combinations with the oligarchy, and like weeds began to grow a little about the doors and courts of their own Houses of Parliament, and like weeds it was thought proper to banish them---and as Government had before resorted to the creation of boroughs to overwhelm the Commons, so now they resorted to a new host of places and

pensions to overwhelm the oligarchy. This is the famous half-million, or the experiment of the Castle, to secure the dependance of Parliament, and to prevent the formation of an Irish party against the domination of a British Cabinet. The Court could not then, like the 1st James and the 1st Charles, command to rise up a new fabric of boroughs like a regal Pandemonium, to constitute a regal House of Commons; it therefore engendered a young and numerous family of places and pensions, to bribe and to buy, and to split and shatter, and to corrupt the oligarchy. Thus were the people once more excluded from the chance of influence in Parliament, and as it were mouldered from the threshold of their own house by a host of placemen and pensioners, who had left the cause of the country to follow the fortunes of the aristocracy, and now left the aristocracy to follow the fortunes of the Court, and then voted new loans and taxes to furnish wages for the double apostasy. You had now but little to give up, and that little you surrendered; you gave your provision trade by an embargo of 76 to the contractors; and you surrendered by new loans and taxes, your revenues to the Minister. You accompanied these sacrifices with the unvarying felicitations of borough Parliaments, on the virtues of Government, on the great and growing prosperity of your country and her commerce, which bring the poor progress of the country, your borough history, and that of your Chief Governors, a continuation of rapine, they have been wittily called, to the catastrophe of 79, which found your State a bankrupt, and your community a beggar, and which induced Parliament to declare that such has been the working of your borough system, and such the sense of that Parliament respecting it, that nothing but a free trade could save the country from impending ruin. I wish to speak with all honour of the Parliament at that moment, but must recollect the circumstance of that moment. Why did Parliament express itself in that manner at that time, and demand its rights a short time after? because Parliament was at those moments in contact with the people, and it is the object of the Reform that she should continue in contact with the people always, and with the Minister

never, except the people should be in contact with him : that Parliament declared that nothing could save this country from impending ruin except a free trade, but in declaring that it declared much more ; it protested against these borough Parliaments of a century, who had acquiesced in the loss of a free trade ; who had suffered the country to be reduced to that state of impending ruin for want of that free trade, and who had beheld the approaches of that ruin with a profusion of thanks, and a regular felicitation on the growing prosperity and flourishing commerce of a ruined country ; and that Parliament did, by necessary interference, declare, to save the country from returning to that state of ruin, and it was absolutely necessary to reform the state and model of those borough Parliaments, and therefore is an authority for a popular representation, as well as for a free trade---indeed it not only proclaimed the necessity, but constituted it ; for in a short time after it gave this country a new political situation, wherein she ceased to be a province, and became a nation, and of course it rendered those borough Parliaments that were adequate to the management of a province, absurd and inapplicable when that province became a nation. A province must be governed with a view to the interest of another country---a nation with a view to her own interest---a borough Parliament was therefore not only competent to govern a province, but the only kind of Parliament fit for the degradation of such a service, and for that very reason it was the most unfit and inadmissible instrument in the government of a nation ; for the principle of its birth being in that opposite to the principle of its duty-- the principle of its birth being Court intrigue, which touched and tainted contractors, and the principle of its duty being the defence of the nation against such intrigue and such contractors the nature of Parliament being opposed to its duty, or its duty to its parent, being in contradiction with its duty to its country---it follows that the nation in such a case must be provincialized, and the independency supposed to have been then obtained at that period, would have been only a transfer of dependency from the Parliament of Great Britain to the Court of St. James's, in covin and in cou-

ple with the borough-brokers of Ireland; therefore the independency of your Parliament, and the full and free representation of your people are terms synonymous and commensurated.

In opposition to this history and these arguments submitted in different shapes to the House, in support of Parliamentary Reform, it was replied, that the borough constitution had worked well at least since 1782; for before no man will contend for it, and that the country had greatly advanced in commerce and in tillage; and indeed as far as the plowman and the weaver are concerned, too much cannot be said to justify against every charge of sloth, the character of the Irishman, and to vindicate against a vulgar error, the native energy of a strong, hardy, bold, brave, laborious, warm-hearted, and **FAITHFUL RACE OF MEN**. But as far as that boast goes to political measures, we cannot so well express our detestation of them as by recital; the propositions, the new taxes without the trade, the new debt, notwithstanding the new taxes, the sale of the Peerage, the surrender of the East India trade for the re-export trade, the refusal of the re-export trade without such barter, the inequality of the channel trade, and the present provincial tariff suffered still to obtain between two countries; 8,000,000*l.* of a loan voted on account of the war, without commercial compensation, liberality, or equality; the increase of offices, for the professed purposes of procuring a majority; another increase of offices since the place-bill; the bar-bill, the convention-bill, the gunpowder-bill, the indemnity-bill, the second indemnity-bill, the insurrection-bill, the suspension of the habeas corpus, General Lake's proclamation by order of Government, the approbation afforded to that proclamation, the subsequent proclamation of Government, more military and decisive; the order to the military to act without waiting for the civil power, the imprisonment of the middle order without law, the detaining them in prison without bringing them to trial, the transporting them without law, burning their houses, burning their villages—crimes, many of which are public, and many committed, which are concealed by the suppression of a free press, by

military force ; the preventing the legal meetings of counties to petition his Majesty, by orders acknowledged to be given to the military to disperse them ; subverting the subject's right to petition ; and finally, the introduction of practices not only unknown to law, but unknown to civilized and christian countries.

Such has been the working of the borough system ; nor could such measures have taken place but for that system. Such practices, however, have in part been defended as acts of power, necessary to prevent insurrection and punish conspiracy. But it appeared to us that in these practices Government was combating effects, not causes ; and that those practices encrease these causes, and therefore will encrease those effects : that admitting every charge of conspiracy and disaffection in its fullest extent— that conspiracy and disaffection are only effects of that great fundamental cause ; that parent conspiracy formed some years ago, to procure by corruption despotic power. This is the cause, and that cause acts according to the reception of its matter, and the tempers and constitutions to which it applies ; and therefore produces on some men disloyalty, in some republicanism, in some the spirit of reform ; but in all deep, great, and growing discontent. That is the cause and the poison which has made some men mad, and all men sick ; and though the Government may not be able to restore reason to the mad, or loyalty to the republican, yet if they mean to restore health to the sick, if they mean to restore content and confidence to all, to most or to any considerable portion of the people, they must take away the poison, they must remove the cause ; they must reform the Parliament. They have told us at sometimes, and at other times they have said the contrary, that it is a spirit of plunder, not politics, that is abroad ; idle talk— whatever be the crime of the present spirit, it is not the crime of theft, if so, it were easily put down ; no, it is a political, not a predatory spirit, it is the spirit of political reformation, carried to different degrees, to liberty, in some instances, to ambition in others, and to power in others. And even in these cases where charged to be carried to confiscation, it is evident from the charge itself that con-

fiscation looks to political vengeance, not private plunder ; and therefore the best way of laying that spirit, of whatever designs or intents, is to lay the pre-existing spirit of unlawful power and unconstitutional influence, that has frightened the people from Parliament, and has called to our world that other potent and circumscribed apparition. The way to defend your liberty ; and the best method to secure your house against a Defender is to secure the Commons House against a Minister. “ There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence, mixing in the public cause,” said Lord Chatham to Mr. Flood, in a private conversation, as he told me, on the civil war between Charles I. and his People. “ There was,” said he, “ ambition, there was sedition, there was violence, but no man will persuade me that it was not the cause of liberty on one side, and tyranny on the other.”---So here there may be conspiracy, there may be republicanism, there may be a spirit of plunder mixing in the public cause, but it is a public cause, and let no man persuade you that it is not the cause of liberty on one side, and tyranny on the other.

The historian of these melancholy and alarming times, censuring, perhaps, both the Minister and the Opposition, and censuring us more for our relaxation, than violence, will, if a candid man, close the sad account by observing, “ That on the whole, the cause of the Irish distraction of 97, was the conduct of the servants of Government, endeavouring to establish, by unlimited bribery, absolute power, that the system of coercion was a necessary consequence, and part of the system of corruption, and that the two systems in their success would have established a ruthless tyranny, tremendous and intolerable, imposed on the Senate by influence, and the people by arms.”---Against such excess of degradation, against any excess whatsoever, we moved the middle, and as we thought the composing and the salutary measure---a Reform of Parliament, which should give a Constitution to the People, and the Catholic Emancipation, which should give a people to the Constitution. We supported that measure by the argument herein advanced, and we defended

ourself by such against a deluge of abuse conveyed in the public prints against us on account of that measure, and I restate those arguments, that however the majority of the House of Commons might have been affected, your understanding may not be carried away by such a torrent of investive. We urged those considerations, we might have added in our defence the dangers of invasion and insurrection, panics most likely to incline the Minister to concur in such a measure, which measure seems to be our best, I might say, our only defence, against those dangers and those panics; we might have added considerations of the immense expence attendant on the working, as it is called, of the Borough Constitution; which expence may be called the prodigality of misrepresentation, or the huge and gigantic profusion which the people supply for turning themselves out of Parliament.

It is well known that the price of Boroughs is from 14 to 16000l. and has in the course of not many years increased one third; a proof at once of the extravagance and audacity of this abuse, which thus looks to immortality, and proceeds unawed by the times and uninstructed by example; and in moments which are held alarming, entertains no fear, conceives no panic, and feels no remorse which prevents the chapman and dealer to go on any risk with his villainous little barter in the very rockings and frownings of the elements, and makes him tremble indeed at liberty, but not at crimes. “ Suspend the habeas corpus act, take away the poor man-- send the Reformer to Newgate--- imprison the North; but for the trade of Parliament--- for the Borough-broker of that trade, don't affect him; give him a Gunpowder Act, give him a Convention Bill, give him an Insurrection Bill, give him an Indemnity Bill; and having saturated him with the Liberty of his Country, give him all the plunder of the State.’ Such is the practical language of that great Noun of the Multitude-- the Borough-monger demurring on the troubles of the times, which he himself has principally caused, and lying at the door of a Secretary full of fores and exactions. This sum I speak of--this 14 or 16000l. must ultimately be paid by you: it is this increase of the price

of Boroughs which has produced the increase of the expence of your establishments, and this increase of the expence of your Establishment which has produced this increase for the price of your Boroughs; they operate alternately like cause and effect, and have within themselves the double principle of rapid ruin; so that the People pay their Members as formerly, but pay them more, and pay them for representing others, not themselves, and give the public purse full and open to the Minister, and rendering it back empty to the People. Oh unthrifty People! who ever surrendered that invaluable right of paying your own Representatives. Rely on it, the People must be the prey if they are not the paymasters. To this public expence we are to add the monstrous and bankrupt waste of private property, becoming now so great that honest men can't in any number afford to come into Parliament: the expence amounts to a child's portion, and the child must be wronged or the father sold or excluded. Thus, in the Borough Constitution, is private virtue and public set at variance, and men must renounce the service of their country or the interest of their family; from this evil—the loss of private fortune, a much greater loss is likely hereafter to take place ---the loss of talent in the public service; for this great expence must in the end work out of Parliament all un-
 stipendiary talent that acts against them. What man of small fortune, what man of great fortune can now afford to come into the House of Commons, or sustain the expence of a seat in Parliament or of a contested Election? And what open place, except in a very few instances, (the city of Dublin is one of them) where the Electors return without cost to their Representatives? I know some who have great talents, and have exercised them in the public service, are disposed to decline situations to the honest individual so expensive and to the public now so unprofitable. To this I am to add a greater evil than those already stated---the expenditure of morals. What shall we say for the morals of a Country---how many years purchase would you give for her virtue, whose Ministry founded its authority on moral depravity, and formed a league and

covenant with an oligarchy to transfer for hire, virtually and substantially the powers of Legislation to the Cabinet of another Kingdom. We inveigh against other combinations---what sort of a combination is this? This, I know not by what name to approach it, shoots its virus into the very heart and marrow of the higher orders of the Country. 'Make your People honest,' says the Court--- 'Make your Court honest,' say the People. It is the higher classes that introduce corruption:--thieving may be learned from poverty; but corruption is learned from riches---it is a venal Court that makes a venal Country -- that vice descended from above: the peasant does not go to the castle for the bribe, but the castle candidate goes to the peasant; and the castle candidate offers the bribe to the peasant, because he expects, in a much greater bribe, to be repaid by the Minister. Thus things go on: 'tis impossible they can last. The trade of Parliament ruins every thing; your Ministers rested their authority entirely on that trade, till now they call in the aid of the military power, to enforce corruption by the sword. The laws did, in my judgment, afford the Crown sufficient power to administer the Country, and preserve the connexion with Great Britain; but our Ministers have despised the ordinary track---the plain, obvious, legitimate, and vulgar bonds between the King and the Subject; they have resorted to the GUINEA and the GALLOWS, as to the only true and faithful friends of Government, and try to hang where they can't corrupt. They have extended the venal stipendiary principle to all constituted authorities; they have given the taint of the grave Corporator as well as the Senator, and have gone into the halls and street to communicate the evil to the middling and orderly part of the society; they have attempted the independency of the bar. I have great objections to the bar-bill, and my objections are great in proportion to my regards for the profession, whose signal services to the cause of liberty must prove to every man's conviction how valuable the acquisition, and how inestimable the loss of that profound and acute profession, must be to the cause of a country, such as this was formerly, where the rule of government was the law of

the land. We have heard of complaints against systems of disorganization; what is this system? Is not the corruption of organized bodies their dissolution? Is not their perversion worse than their dissolution? What shall we say on the attempts of Ministers on Sheriffs, and the appointment of that Magistrate with a view to Parliamentary influence only, and to the prevention of legal aggregate meetings, and the suppression of the public sentiment? --- These things must have an end---this disorganization of constituted authorities by court influence must have an end.

I am not superstitious---but I know that States, like individuals, are punished; it is to prevent their punishment we essayed their reformation; they are punished collectively, and they are punished slowly, but they are punished; where the people are generally or universally corrupt, the society comes to a state of dissolution; where that corruption is confined to those who administer the country, that power must come to a state of dissolution; but in order to prevent the society from partaking of that corruption and consequence of that bankrupt dissolution, it is necessary that the power that administers the country, should be brought speedily and radically to a state of reformation; the best systems are not immortal; are the worst? Is the trade of Parliament immortal? Have the best systems perished? and shall this be impassable and everlasting, infinite in its duration, as it is unbounded in its profligacy. What was the case of Carthage---of Rome---and of the Court of France? What is the case of the Court of England? Sitting under the stroke of Justice for the American War, paying pains and penalties in augmented burdens and diminished glory; that influence which has depressed her liberty, has destroyed her energy, and rendered her as unfit to preserve her Empire as her Freedom. As long as the battle was between the Court and Constitution, the former was perfectly equal to subdue her own people, but when she was to combat another people, she was unequal to the task, and for the very reason, because she had seduced and debased her own.--- The corruption of the Court has rendered England vincible, and has endued her in her present state of national degradation, with an

insensibility of glory, the result and evidence of mental degeneracy. I remember to have heard Lord Chatham in one of his speeches on the Middlesex Election observe, that in his Ministry the object of the Court of England was the conquest of the French, and that now it was the conquest of Mr. Wilkes. The pursuing such like conquests as these over Mr. Wilkes, has enabled the French to establish a conquest over the English. The King who is advised to conquer the liberty of his subjects, prepares those subjects for a foreign yoke. The Romans were conquered at Cannæ, first by Varo, and afterwards by Hannibal. The English have been conquered, first by the Minister, and afterwards by the French. The Romans were finally conquered by the barbarians of the North, because they had been previously conquered by the Princes of the Empire, and then the half armed savage with the pike and the pole came down on the frontiers, and disposed of the Masters of the World as of the stock of the land, the gouty stock of the rich, and the mute stock of the people.

It is now sixty years since the adoption of the project to supply in corruption what the Chief Magistrate lost in prerogative--the loss of thirteen provinces, of 120,000,000l; to lose these provinces, the loss of our station in Europe, the loss of 130 millions, to lose that station; to place the Crown of England as low in Europe as in America, and to put France at the head of Europe, instead of Great Britain, while her people crouch under a load of debt and taxes, without an empire to console, or a constitution to cover them, has been the working of that project; it has worked so well as to have worked the people out of their liberty, and his Majesty out of his empire; to leave him as little authority in Europe, as his people in Parliament; and to put the King at the feet of France, as the people are put at the feet of the King; public credit has also fallen a victim to this success, its last great conquest after liberty and empire. In this rapid decline no one Minister has been punished, or even questioned; and an empire and a constitution have been lost without one penal example; and in a war unparalled in expence and disgrace, and attended with the grossest and rankest errors, closing the

account of blood with proclamation of insolvency---no murmur from the Parliament of either countries---no murmur! Far from enquiry or complain't, confidence has uniformly attended defeat and dishonour. The Minister's majorities are become as numerous as his disgraces; and so gigantic has been his encroachments on the independency of the Constitution, that they can only be matched by the gigantic encroachment of the enemy on the empire. In short, so perfectly do the people appear to be driven out of all footing in the constitution, that when his Majesty is driven out of almost all footing in Europe, and a question is made by the people, whether the Ministers of these disgraces and dishonours shall be dismissed? they have their majority at hand to support them. Against this inundation of evil we interposed Reform; we were convinced of its necessity, from the consideration of corruption at home; we were confirmed in that conviction from the consideration of revolutions abroad. We saw the regal power of France destroyed by debts, by expences, and by abuses: We saw the Nobility interpose for those abuses only to encumber the Throne with their ruins, and to add revolution of property to revolution of government; we saw in the American Revolution that a people determined to be free cannot be enslaved; the British Government was not equal to the task, even in plentitude of empire, supported by the different Governments of the Provinces, and by the sad apostacy of the hapless loyalist; that loyalist is a lesson to the rich and great to stand by their country in all situations; and that in a contest with a remote Court, the first post of safety is to stand by the country, the second post of safety is to stand by the country, and the third post of safety is to stand by the country; in that American contest we saw that reform, which had been born in England, and banished to America, advances like the Shepherd Lad in Holy Writ, and overthrow Goliath. He returned riding on the wave of the Atlantic, and his spirit moved on the waters of Europe. The royal ship of France went down---the British man of war labours---your vessel is affected---throw your people overboard, say your Ministers, and ballast with your abuses;

throw your abuses over-board, we said, and ballast with your people. We recollected these Islands were formerly placed in a sea of despotism, we saw they were now two Kingdoms in a Republican Ocean, situated between two great Revolutions, with a certainty of being influenced more or less by one or by both. We asked ourselves was it possible that the American Revolution could have had such effects on France, and that the American and the French Revolutions would have no effect on these countries. The questions that affect the world are decided on the Theatre of the World. The great question of popular liberty was fought on the great rivers of Europe and America; it remained to moderate what we could not govern; and what method so safe to moderate popular power as by limited Monarchy? and what method remains to limit the Monarchy of these kingdoms (it has now no limits), as by reforming Parliament? What method I say, to prevent a Revolution but a Reformation? and what is that Reformation of Parliament but the restoration to the people of Self-legislation, without which there is no liberty, as without Reformation there is no Self-legislation? So we reasoned. The Government of a country may be placed in the hands of one man, and that one man may reside in another kingdom, and yet the people may be free and satisfied; but to have the Legislature of the country, or what is the same thing, the influencing and directing spirit of the Legislature placed out of the country, to have not only the King but the Legislature an absentee---to have not only the head but the heart disposed of in another country. Such a condition may be a disguised, but is unqualified and perfect, despotism. Self-legislation is life, and has been fought for as for being. It was that principle that called forth resistance to the House of Stuart, and baptized with royalty the House of Hanover, when the people stood Sponsors for their allegiance to the liberty of the subjects: for Kings are but satellites, and your freedom is the luminary that has called them to the skies. It was with a view, therefore, to restore liberty, and with a view also to secure and immortalize royalty, by restoring to the people self-legislation, we proposed Reform; a prin-

ciple of attraction about which the King and People would
 spin on quietly and insensibly in regular movements, and
 in a system common to both. 'No---no---no---the half
 ' million, said the Minister, that is my principle of at-
 ' traction. Among the rich I send my half million, and I
 ' dispatch my coercion among the people.' His Devil went
 forth---He destroyed Liberty and Property---He consumed
 the Press---He burned Houses and Villages---and he fail-
 ed.' 'Recal your Soldier, we said, and in his place dis-
 ' patch our messenger---try conciliation, you have declared
 ' you with the People should rebel, to which we answer,
 ' God forbid! Rather let them weary the royal ear with
 ' petitions, and let the Dove be again sent to the King;
 ' it may bring back the Olive, and as to you, thou mad
 ' Minister! who pour in regiment after regiment to dra-
 ' goon the Irish, because you have forfeited their affections:
 ' We beseech, we supplicate, we admonish, reconcile the
 ' people; combat Revolution by Reform; let blood be
 ' your last experiment.' Combat the Spirit of Democracy
 by the Spirit of Liberty; the wild Spirit of Democratic
 Liberty by the regulated Spirit of Organized Liberty,
 such as may be found in a limited Monarchy, with a free
 Parliament; but how accomplish that but by reforming the
 present Parliament, whose narrow and contracted forma-
 tion in both countries excludes popular representation; *i. e.*
 excludes self-legislation; *i. e.* excludes liberty, and whose
 fatal compliances the result of that defective representation
 have caused, or countenanced, or sanctioned, or suffered
 for a course of years, a succession of measures which have
 collected upon us such an accumulation of calamity, and
 which have finally at an immense expence, and through a
 sea of blood, stranded these kingdoms on a solitary shore,
 naked of Empire, naked of liberty, and naked of innocence,
 to ponder on an abyss which has swallowed up one part of
 their fortunes, and yawns for the remainder.

May the Kingly power that forms one estate in our
 Constitution continue for ever; but let it be, as it pro-
 fesses to be, and is by the principles and laws of these
 countries it should be—one estate only; and not a power

constituting one estate, creating another, and influencing a third.

May the Parliamentary Constitution prosper ; but let it be an operative, independent, and active part of the Constitution, advising, confining, and sometimes directing the Kingly power.

May the House of Commons flourish ; but let the People be the sole authors of its existence, as they should be the great object of its care.

May the connexion with Great Britain continue ; but let the result of that connexion be perfect freedom, in the fairest and fullest sense, of all descriptions of men, without distinction of religion."

To this purpose we spoke ; and, speaking this to no purpose, withdrew. It now remains to add this supplication ;---" However it may please the Almighty to dispose
" of Princes, or of Parliaments---MAY THE LIBERTIES
" OF THE PEOPLE BE IMMORTAL !

HENRY GRATTAN.

